

Design and Development Checklist for Adapting the Communication Materials

Use this checklist to make sure your adapted materials reflect key design and development principles.

Do the materials clearly state what your organization is doing to support people in working toward a common goal?

- ✓ **Explain why your organization cares about these topics.** In the absence of a clear message, people often fear the worst: that the company only cares about the bottom line. Be clear about your reasons for communicating. What do you expect employees or members to gain? What's the benefit to your organization?

Example: ABC Company is asking employees to join with us in putting quality first. Our goal is to make sure that all employees have the information they need to make wise health care choices.

- ✓ **Insert descriptions of what your organization is doing to promote and support evidence-based health care.** Hearing what employers, insurers, and purchasers are doing to promote quality health care reassures your employees or members that they are not in this alone. You don't need to provide a detailed or extensive explanation; just be transparent and share what you are doing to improve quality and control costs.

Example: ABC Company is committed to making sure that you have high-quality health care providers to choose from. That's why we are working with local health care providers to publicly report information on quality.

Are the key messages clear?

- ✓ **Use short, take-home messages to emphasize key concepts.**
- ✓ **Reinforce messages throughout the document.** Reiterating key messages multiple times and in different ways emphasizes their importance.

Example: "Be informed about and involved in your health care." "Ask questions and learn more." "Make wise use of health care resources."

Example: The phrase "be informed and involved" is repeated throughout the Communication Materials and reiterated with examples.

Do the materials include examples to make them personally relevant?

- ✓ **Use concrete examples or vignettes to attract interest, enhance understanding of the information, and help people apply new information to their own lives.** Use the vignettes included in the Toolkit materials or collect and incorporate quotes from members of your organization.

Example: See page 3 of "Good quality health care: What it is and why you can't take it for granted" in Topic Area 3 for an example of how a photograph and quote can help personalize the information.

Are the materials action-oriented?

- ✓ **Give specific action items.**
- ✓ **Give detailed suggestions, particularly for new or unfamiliar behaviors.**
- ✓ **Let people know the benefits of taking action.**
- ✓ **Tell people how to get more information.**

Example: Make a written list of questions and bring it with you to your doctor's appointment.

Example: Don't be afraid to ask the same question again. Say, "I'm sorry, but I still don't understand. Would you try explaining it in a different way?"

Example: Making written lists helps you organize your thoughts and concerns, feel more confident, and make sure you cover everything that is important to you.

Example: For more advice on how and why to ask questions, see the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's "Questions Are the Answer" at www.ahrq.gov/questionsaretheanswer.

Do the materials explain difficult or unfamiliar concepts in ways that are easy to understand?

- ✓ **Use simple language accompanied by concrete examples.** Use plain language to define key terms and ideas (e.g., "medical evidence," "quality standards"). Give examples to make the definition more concrete. Avoid jargon whenever possible.
- ✓ **Introduce and explain key concepts one at a time.** Take a step-by-step approach to make clear connections between key concepts. First, introduce a new concept and explain it. Then, add another concept and tell how it is connected.

Example: Quality health care is care that gets the best results for your health, is safe, and uses health care resources in the most efficient ways. It's the type of care you want for yourself and your family.

Example: The first document in Topic Area 3 ("Good quality health care: what it is and why you can't take it for granted") explains what quality health care is. The other documents build on this core concept, discussing medical evidence and using quality information in health care decision-making.

Is the formatting simple, approachable, and easy to skim?

- ✓ **Break up text into chunks.** Avoid having a "wall of words."
 - ✓ Use **bullets** to emphasize key points.
 - ✓ Use **numbered lists** to emphasize action steps.
 - ✓ Include **pictures and graphics** to add visual interest.
 - ✓ Use **headings** to introduce a section.
 - ✓ Include plenty of **"white space."**
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